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COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN



It's been a very busy winter! Governor Baker honored me with his announcement of my appointment as Commissioner on December 23, 2014; he swore me in on February 6, 2015. As I needed some time to close out my duties as Town Administrator in the beautiful town of Princeton, my first official day of work as Commissioner was February 13th.

I think it's critical to get out among the Department's constituents so I may better learn how MDAR can best serve them, and that's what we've been doing since Day One. In addition to meetings at MDAR's Boston offices, here's where I've been in my first thirty days.

- February 5: MA Nursery and Landscaping Association Annual Meeting, Boston (I wasn't "official" yet, but coming out of the nursery business and the Green Industry, how could I stay away?)
- February 13: Agricultural Lands Preservation Committee, Westborough
- February 18: MA Association of Dairy Farmers and Mass. Dairy Promotion Board Joint Annual Meetings, Northampton
- February 24: MA Farm Winery and Growers Association Annual Meeting, Sturbridge
- February 25: Harvest New England Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show and MA Association of Agricultural Commissions Annual Meeting, Sturbridge
- February 28: Mass Farmers Markets annual Meeting, Russell's Garden Center, Wayland
- March 1: Southeast MA Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) Annual Agriculture & Food Conference and tour of Bristol Agricultural High School, Dighton
- March 3: Food Policy Council meeting, Worcester
- March 5: Pesticide Board meeting, Boston
- March 6: MA Maple Producers Association's Annual Kick Off with Governor Baker and Secretary Beaton, Hollis Hills Farm, Fitchburg – [pictures here](#)
- March 6: MA Farm Bureau, Marlborough
- March 10: Sustainable Business Network of MA Specialty Crop Trade Show & Local Food Trade Show, Boston
- March 11: Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association Winter Grower Meeting, Plymouth
- March 13: Worcester County Farm Bureau Legislative Breakfast, Grafton
- March 13: Senator Don Humason's (Westfield) Annual Western MA Legislators' Pancake Brunch, Pomeroy Sugar House and Dairy Farm, Westfield



Stephen Dempsey, Superintendent/Director of Bristol County Agricultural High School and Department of Agriculture Commissioner John Lebeaux – Tour of Bristol County Agricultural High School



Commissioner John Lebeaux



SEMAM Annual Agriculture & Food Conference



SEMAM's Derek Christianson

Photos by: [edible South Shore & South Coast](#)

MDAR's terrific staff ably handled the transition between administrations without skipping a beat. I want to recognize two individuals who took on double duty after Governor Baker's inauguration while I was finishing up in Princeton: Acting Commissioner (and since my arrival, current Chief of Staff) Alisha Bouchard and General Counsel Tara Zadeh who served as Alisha's Chief of Staff during the transition period. All staff have been patiently bringing me up to speed on the details of the dozens of programs MDAR proudly offers to maintain its mission to help keep Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound.

The first thirty days have been both a whirlwind and a delight. As the days get longer, the snowpack melts and the growing season approaches, I wish all sectors of MA Agriculture a successful 2015. I look forward to meeting with many of you in the coming months. Now let's get growing!

Cordially,

John Lebeaux, Commissioner



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FOREFRONT

Energy News

The MA Farm Energy Program (MFEP) - MDAR and our new MFEP partner The Center for EcoTechnology, Inc., (CET) want you to know the MA Farm Energy Program is here to help you. Please visit our new website, get familiar with our new contact information and find out about our technical and financial assistance opportunities!

Please visit (and bookmark!) our new website: www.massfarmenergy.com. Have you been meaning to get an energy audit for your farm? Are there energy efficiency projects you would like to complete? To learn more about how you can improve your farm's operations, reduce your energy use and save money, please complete the *Request Form* online or email us at info@massfarmenergy.com or call 413-727-3090.

Workshop: Solar Thermal for Your Farm - Hosted by the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program

Come learn about solar thermal technologies, applications and benefits for your farm, as well as funding opportunities!

Two locations:

March 27 - 9:30 am – 12:30pm

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

101 University Drive, Suite C4, **Amherst**

Or

April 2 – 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

UMass Cranberry Experiment Station

1 State Bog Road, **East Wareham**

Presenters: Gerry Palano, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and Peter McPhee, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. Topics: Solar thermal technologies, applications for your farm and funding opportunities. To pre-register or receive further information, please contact Megan Denardo at 413-727-3090 or megan.denardo@cetonline.org

USDA REAP Deadlines

USDA Rural Development (RD) has issued an update regarding their Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). Their Final Rule for REAP and the FY15 NOSA were published in the December 29, 2014 edition of the Federal Register.

<https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30184> = NOSA

<https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30133> = Final Rule

Program deadlines were announced as follows:

Renewable Energy Systems (RES)/Energy Efficiency Improvements (EEI) Grant Application deadlines:

- 1st deadline = April 30, 2015 and 2nd deadline= June 30, 2015
- Grants wishing to compete for \$20,000 or less set-aside funding must apply by the April 30, 2015 (1st deadline).

RES/EEI Guaranteed Loan Application deadlines:

- Reviewed and processed on a monthly basis the first business day of each month.

Applications are being accepted from small rural business and agricultural producers for grants for the installation of energy efficiency improvements & renewable energy systems. The MA application templates for 2015 have been revised. There are 6 available templates, based on project size:

1. EE_small_80K or less= Energy Efficiency with Total projects cost of \$80,000 or less
2. EE_middle_80K+-199K= Energy Efficiency with total project costs between \$80,001-199,999

3. EE_Large_200k+ Energy Efficiency with total projects costs of \$200,000 or more
4. RE_small_80k_less =Renewable Energy projects with total Project Cost of \$80K or less
5. RE-middle_80K+-199K=Renewable Energy projects with total projects costs between 80,001-199,999
6. RE_Large_200k+=Renewable Energy projects with total project costs of \$200,000 or more

Constructions costs incurred prior to the submission of a complete application & agency environmental review will not be considered.

It would be most helpful, while giving advice on realistic expectations of funding to have a working pipeline of potential applications per state. If you plan on submitting a REAP application for this upcoming funding cycle, please send an email to Anne Correia at Anne.Correia@ma.usda.gov with the following:

1. State that the project located in
2. Name of applicant/organization
3. Amount or approximate range

This information is not public. It does not have to be exact, and you will not be penalized if you do not submit. A separate email will be sent when the REAP application deadline has been published. Please call USDA's RD Energy Coordinator if you have questions, Anne Correia, Energy Coordinator, BCP Specialist, Business & Cooperative Programs, Rural Development, USDA, West Wareham, MA. 508-295-5151 Ext. 3, www.rurdev.usda.gov/ma.

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MA Food Systems Planning in Progress

Massachusetts is developing its first comprehensive food system plan since 1974. The MA Food Policy Council (MFPC), through a contract managed by MDAR, is engaged in a project to develop a general framework for goals and objectives that will improve Massachusetts' agricultural economy, enhance the resiliency of the Commonwealth's food system, and improve the nutritional health of the state's population. The plan will have a heavy, but not exclusive emphasis, on food production in the Commonwealth and the economic viability of the agricultural sector.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and three partnering organizations (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and Massachusetts Workforce Alliance) are facilitating the planning process and will help to draft the plan. There are many opportunities to be involved including participation in the working groups, sharing comments through the website, and commenting on draft chapters as they are released. A full description of the plan and working group lead contacts is at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council. Find out what's coming up with the MA Food Systems Planning: www.mafoodplan.org.

The Working Groups for the MA Food Systems Planning have been up and running, developing findings and recommendations that will inform the final plan. More than 150 people participated in working group sessions in February as well as a listening session and regional forum was held at UMass Amherst, with over 100 participants from around the Pioneer Valley. Breakout groups provided material that the MAPC facilitating team is aggregating and analyzing for integration into the plan. The Berkshire Regional Forum was also held in February in Pittsfield, and was well-attended by farmers and advocates from many sectors within the food system.



Some 1,000 comments from public forums, website inquiries, and other avenues of participation have been collected by the MAPC, who has pulled out key findings and recommendations to help inform the working groups' discussions. At the same time, work on the literature review is being finished up.

Outreach work with individuals and groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in these discussions, revealing such concerns as how to bring healthy and local food into school cafeterias, how and where farmers markets are

sited, and how to expand SNAP and other subsidy programs to increase access to fresh and local food continues.

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Governor Baker Officially Kicked Off the Massachusetts Maple Syrup Season

On Friday, March 6th, [Governor Charlie Baker Massachusetts officially kicked off the Massachusetts maple syrup season](#), with a ceremonial maple tree tap at Hollis Hills Farm, Fitchburg. EOEEA Secretary Matthew Beaton, and DAR Commissioner John Lebeaux were also be in attendance. Photos by Winton Pitcoff.

To learn about sugarhouses holding open houses, and restaurants featuring menu items made with maple syrup, visit www.massmaple.org and call the Massachusetts Maple Association at 413-628-3912, or go to the *Massgrown and Fresher* website www.mass.gov/massgrown and click on maple for a complete listing of farms, sugarhouses, and restaurants.




Massachusetts will hold its second annual **Maple Weekend, March 21 – 22**, to highlight the wonderful, versatile products made by Bay State maple producers. The Massachusetts Maple Producers Association (MMPA) members will have events and activities to draw attention to the state's maple producers and their products, and encourage direct-to-consumer sales. The Maple Weekend will feature open house events at sugarhouses, and special menu items made with maple syrup at local restaurants. Visitors to participating sugarhouses and restaurants will have an opportunity to learn about the sugaring process, meet sugarmakers, and hear about how important it is to the local economy and environment.


Massachusetts is home to about 280 maple syrup producers including at least 80 that host visitors throughout the sugaring season. Last year they produced about 61,000 gallons of maple syrup, worth more than \$3.72 million. Agricultural tourism associated with maple syrup production is worth almost as much as the syrup itself. Approximately \$1.9 million in revenue is generated by maple farms, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, country inns, and other attractions in farm communities. The industry preserves more than 13,000 acres of land, helping keep Massachusetts green across the board.

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Update Your Farm Information on Massgrown Map



Before the snow melts away and you get really busy, a reminder for farms to check your information on the Massgrown map to make sure your farm information is up to date, www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/map. Our Massgrown portal is getting more web traffic than ever! In 2014 the number of page-views for the MassGrown portal increased by 26% from 2013. That means that more and more consumers are finding out about your farm and ag-tivities across the state! Send your edits to Rick LeBlanc, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. If you would like to be added to the map, please fill out the two page marketing survey, click [here](#)  (.pdf , .doc ).

Also, let us know about your special farm events! Our [Agricultural and Culinary Events Calendar](#) is one of our most popular Massachusetts grown...and fresher website features. Curious locavores and culinary travelers are eager to find a farm, culinary or community event. Submit your calendar listings [here](#) . Have a favorite farm/family recipe? Send that in as well to Julia.Grimaldi@state.ma.us and we will look to feature it as [Recipe of the Month](#). We also tweet them out from time to time [@Massgrown](#).

"Massgrown and Fresher" price cards and posters are now available. [Click here](#) to see our various Massgrown posters, price cards, and order form.

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Farmers' Market Updates

Farmers' Market Seeking Vendors - Many farmers' markets across the state are looking for additional vendors for the 2015 season. [Check here](#) to see if there is a market for you. The list will be updated throughout the season, so check back for updates.

SNAP Wireless Equipment Options - There are currently two programs for farmers market managers and farmers looking for wireless equipment to process SNAP payments. For more information, including eligibility criteria [visit here](#).

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Certifications - The [Massachusetts Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#) (FMNP) is a state-administered federal nutrition program that provides women and children enrolled in the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program and low-income seniors, with coupons redeemable for fresh locally grown produce from Massachusetts farmers' markets. The Massachusetts program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, WIC Nutrition Program, and Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

WIC participants receive \$20 in coupons and seniors receive \$25 in coupons (\$2.50 each for each coupon) to use at authorized Massachusetts farmers' markets. The FMNP runs from June through October. Authorized farmers are reimbursed for the face value of the coupons.

Farmers may accept coupons only at markets authorized to participate in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. All markets and farmers that are new to the program must receive training. We are conducting webinars for new markets and farmers, and for any participants who would like to be reminded of the

program guidelines. For more information, or to become an authorized farmer or market, contact Rebecca Davidson at 617-626-1744, or at Rebecca.Davidson@State.ma.us.

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MA ROPS Still Taking Applications

The Massachusetts [Rollover Protective Structure Program \(ROPS\)](#) is a PILOT Program designed to assist farmers in installing rollbars by offering a rebate of 70% of costs up to \$865. With the help of the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine & Health, MDAR is pleased to introduce a Tractor Rollbar Rebate Program for Massachusetts. This Pilot Program has limited funds, but we hope to assist in retrofitting 28 to 35 tractors with rollbars in 2015. Participants in the ROPS program will be chosen in a first come first served manner.

How the ROPS Rebate Program works for Massachusetts:

All participants must apply on-line at www.ropsr4u.com or by calling the ROPS Hotline (1-877-ROPS-R4U or 1-877-767-7748). ROPS Hotline staff will provide estimated costs as well as sources for purchasing certified ROPS. Prior to ordering, participants must call for Pre-approval. Pre-approval is required to ensure funds are available. We do not guarantee the rebate until approval is given. This effectively helps us to track how much money is spent, promised out, got left, etc. Once Pre-approval is given, the participant may order the ROPS and then must re-contact the ROPS Hotline staff (within a day or two) to confirm where they ordered and what the estimated price is. [Flyer and complete details here.](#)

Contacts: Barbara Bayes - ROPS Hotline (1-877-ROPS-R4U or 1-877-767-7748), bbayes@nycamh.com, Bob Rondeau, MDAR, 617-626-1804, robert.rondeau@state.ma.us.

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EPA Worker Protection Standard Train-the Trainer Course for Organic and Non-certified Pesticide Users

UMass Extension is offering 3 half-day formal WPS Train the Trainer courses this spring. These programs are geared toward organic growers and other farmers who are not certified pesticide applicators. After you leave the training, you will have the ability and authority to conduct both handler and worker trainings for your employees as required by EPA.

Training Dates:

Eastern MA: Tuesday, April 14 from 9am-1pm - Appleton Farm, 219 County Road, Ipswich, MA

Central MA: Tuesday, April 21 from 9am-1pm - Brigham Hill Community Farm, 37 Wheeler Rd., North Grafton, MA

Western MA: Tuesday, April 28 from 9am-1pm - Brookfield Farm, 24 Hulst Rd., Amherst, MA

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE, but PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Contact Lisa McKeag at 413-577-3976 or lmckeag@umext.umass.edu.

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Learn to Farm Scholarships Announced

Now in its 13th year and licensed as a private occupational school, The Farm School's year-long Learn to Farm program provides practical training in forestry, carpentry, homesteading, mechanics, business planning, marketing, animal husbandry and commercial organic vegetable production and turns out graduates who go on to success in a wide variety of careers (including farming!).

And now is the time to check out the year-long program and apply, as they have just announced new scholarships that will ensure all can attend, regardless of means: www.farmschool.org/learntofarm.

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Ag Commission Updates

Last few months have been busy with regional meetings and involvement in the Harvest NE Conference a couple weeks ago. This [6th AgCom Newsletter](#), focuses on recent activities of Agricultural Commissions around the state. These newsletters are sent out periodically to keep AgComs up-to-date on current AgCom issues, upcoming events, ideas and projects of AgComs, grant programs and deadlines, and other related items. Please let us know (at westover03@comcast.net or clekstrom@mac.com) if your email address has changed or if you can provide email addresses for others on your AgCom. To learn more about MAAC, visit www.massagcom.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS / WORKSHOPS

- **March 19 - 2015 Farm Share Fair** - First Church, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, 5:30 - 8:30 pm. Now accepting vendor and sponsor applications. Boston area's direct-to-consumer marketing event for food producers across Massachusetts. Consumers want to meet their farmers and have the opportunity to compare options. Vendors - get to know your target market one-on-one, and have the opportunity to sell your CSA, Farm Share or Home Delivery programs. On-site sampling, and food or product sales welcome! This annual event draws over 500 participants. Sign up now – vendor space is limited! Sponsorship visibility opportunities available. [Click here](#) to sign up. Questions, contact mindy@mindyharriscommunications.com, www.farmsharefair.com.
- **March 24 - Northeast Harvest Agricultural Conference**, Coolidge Hall, Topsfield Fairgrounds, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Sessions include: *Basic Weed Management Principles and Control Updates* with Richard Bonanno, *Farm to Restaurant* with Carolyn Grieco, *Farm Labor Laws and Updated Regulations* with Brad Mitchell, *Pricing Matters: How to Price Crops for Maximum Profits* with Jessica Angell, and more. [Registration and details here](#).
- **March 26 - UMass Extension Symposium: Pollinator Health for Agriculture and Landscapes** - Campus Center Auditorium, UMass Amherst Campus, 8:45 am to 4:00 pm. Full day educational program for all sectors of the agriculture and landscape communities sponsored by

University of Massachusetts Extension. Experts from the University of MA Amherst, University of Maine and the CT Ag Experiment Station will share their expertise and latest scientific research on pollinator health, designing pollinator support plantings, neonicotinoids in agriculture and landscapes and bee-friendly landscapes. 4 pesticide credits. [Program and registration here.](#)

- **March 26 - Massachusetts Poultry Enhancement Council Meeting** - Palmer Police Station, 4419 Main St., Palmer, MA, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. All welcomed. Managing Risks vs. Rewards for Massachusetts Poultry Producers. Agenda: Are you operating a business or is it a hobby? Panel of industry representatives for Q&A; Discussion of recent Salmonella pullorum positive lab results; How a positive S. pullorum test affects you. This is an open meeting: Encourage anyone who may have an interest in poultry to attend. Questions, contact Ed Hageman, Edward.Hageman@state.ma.us, 617-626-1796.
- **March 28 - 3rd Annual Massachusetts Urban Farming Conference** - Worcester State University, 8:00 - 5:30 pm. Presented by: City Growers and Urban Farming Institute, in partnership with the MDAR. Panels and workshops include, Urban Farming and STEM Education, Soil Nutrition, Urban Food Hubs, Aquaponics, Urban Farming Training Workshop, Biodynamic Growing, Viable and Sustainable Enterprises, Cultural Crop Production, Youth and Urban Agriculture, Farms First: How Urban Ag Can Help Address Food Insecurity. Discounts for registering early, [click here](#). or more information, contact Rose Arruda at MDAR; Rose.Arruda@state.ma.us, For sponsorship and vendor opportunities, contact Crystal Johnson Crystal@ISESPlanning.com.
- **March 31 - Agriculture Day at the Statehouse – Boston –** [More here](#).
- **April 2 - Fortifying our Foodshed** - New Bedford Whaling Museum, 18 Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm (Networking begins at 6:00 pm). Evening focusing on the past, present, and future of agriculture in Southeastern Massachusetts. Highlighting the recently published A New England Food Vision and SE Massachusetts Food Shed Analysis. Featuring presentations from SEMAP, Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network, and guest speaker, Dr. Tom Kelly. Networking session begins at 6:00 pm. [More here](#).
- **April 7 - 9 - Farm to Institution Summit** - UMass Amherst, Amherst. The 2015 Summit is a first-year conference that will bring together leaders from the region who are working to increase use of regionally grown food by schools, colleges, health care facilities, and other institutions. Please join us – hundreds of other farm to institution advocates -- for three exciting days of learning, sharing, exploring and connecting. The event will convene representatives from institutional facilities, along with their food supply chain partners and farm to institution advocates, to maximize collective impact and overcome challenges to buying more local food. The conference will feature three sector-specific forums for farm to school, farm to college and farm to health care, plus a full day of cross-sector workshops, sessions, speakers, activities and more! [Details here](#). Contact: summit@farmtoinstitution.org.
- **April 10 - Federal Grant Writing Workshop: Learn Successful Strategies for Writing Winning Grants for Local Foods** - Hartman's Herb Farm, Barre, MA, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. No-cost, and open to the public. Do you operate a local food related business, organization, or farmers market? Are you seeking funding to expand your work and impact on the local food system? This grant writing workshop will walk participants through all you need to know to navigate and apply for the upcoming 2015 USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Farm Bill grants which provide funding for local &

regional food system projects including: Local Food Promotion Program grant consists of two types of funding, a planning grant and an implementation grant for a broad variety of food system activities including: growing, aggregating, processing, or selling regionally produced food; and The Farmers Market Promotion Program grant is designed to support direct-to-consumer farm marketing activities and promotion. [Register here.](#)

- **May 1 - A World of Taste at Showcase Live, Foxboro.** First ever wine, food, and beer (and liquor) tasting coming to Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place. Celebrity guests from the Patriots and Revolution have been invited. This event will have 40-50 vendors showcasing worldly and local products for you to TASTE. This is an 21+ event. \$50 for tickets in advance, \$60 at the door. Tickets now on sale online at www.aworldoftaste.com or at the Showcase Live box office. **For sponsorship opportunities, vendor space, and media access, please email: info@aworldoftaste.com.** Vendors include: Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Sam Adams Brewing Company, Plymouth Winery, Mill River Wines, Downeast Cider, Cambridge Brewing Company, and many many more! 100% of proceeds of this event will be going to charity. For more information, visit www.aworldoftaste.com.

*For our ongoing list of ag-industry events and workshops, visit and bookmark www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/events/. For culinary and consumer events, click [here](#).

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USDA News

USDA Announces \$97 Million Available to Expand Access to Healthy Food, Support Rural Economies

Grants Will Support Local Food Systems, Specialty Crop Producers and Farm to School Efforts; Expands Risk Protection for Specialty Crop Producers

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced the availability of \$96.8 million in grants to fund innovative projects designed to support specialty crop producers, local food entrepreneurs, and farm to school efforts, which in turn will increase access to healthy, nutritious food for American families and children. The announcement is part of USDA efforts during National Nutrition Month to focus on improving access to fresh, healthy, and nutritious products for millions of Americans.

Secretary Vilsack also announced changes in the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) to help increase access to the program for beginning, limited-resource and other producers who do not have risk protection available through crop insurance products. Many of these producers grow fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops. "With these changes, more farmers can enter the specialty crop marketplace with peace of mind that they have risk protection should disaster strike," said Vilsack.

The grant programs administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) include the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) and the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program which covers two types of grants: the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) and the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). Also included in the announcement is the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Farm to School Grant Program, designed to bring local foods into the school cafeteria. USDA's Farm Service Agency

implements the NAP program, which has been expanded to better protect specialty crop and other eligible producers from losses due to natural disasters.

Over \$63.2 million in SCBGP grants are allocated to U.S. States and territories based on a formula that considers both specialty crop acreage and production value. Interested applicants should apply directly through their State department of agriculture. A listing of state contacts and application due dates can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgbp.

The FSMIP provides \$1 million in matching funds to State departments of agriculture, state colleges and universities, and other appropriate state agencies. Funds will support research projects that address challenges and opportunities in marketing, transporting, and distributing U.S. agricultural products domestically and internationally.

The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program provides a combined total of \$26.6 million divided equally between its two grant programs. The FMPP provides \$13.3 million to support projects for direct farmer-to-consumer marketing projects such as farmers markets, community-supported agriculture programs, roadside stands, and agritourism. The LFPP offers \$13.3 million in funds for projects that support intermediary supply chain activities for businesses that process, distribute, aggregate, and store locally- or regionally-produced food products.

Grant applications for FSMIP, FMPP and LFPP must be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 14, 2015. Applicants should start the Grants.gov registration process as soon as possible to ensure that they meet the deadline. [Complete details here.](#)

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USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Publishes New Marketing Reports

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service research reports/case study assessments on food hubs, food aggregation facilities and the development of collaborative value chain partnerships in the U.S. local food sector. A more general explanation of our program's scope of activity may be found [here](#).

List of reports:

- 1) [Food Value Chains: Creating Shared Value to Enhance Marketing Success](#)
- 2) [Regional Food Hub Resource Guide](#)
- 3) [Moving Food Along the Value Chain: Innovations in Food Distribution](#)
- 4) [Building a Food Hub from the Ground Up: A Facility Design Case Study of Tuscarora Organic Growers](#)
- 5) [A Practitioner's Guide to Conducting an Economic Impact Assessment of Regional Food Hubs using IMPLAN: a step-by-step approach](#)

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BRIEFS / CLASSIFIED / JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- **MDAR is hiring a seasonal Plant Pest Survey Technician** - If you or someone you know likes the idea of being paid to travel the state and spend time outdoors this spring and summer, please [click here for details](#). Applications due by March 27.
- **Ag Scholarships:** In 2015, Farm Credit East will award up to thirty-one \$1,500 scholarships to qualified students, including diversity scholarships. Look for students who are committed to a career in agriculture and have

demonstrated exceptional achievement. Decisions based on essay, experience, course of study and extracurricular activities. April 3 deadline - [More here.](#)

- **Two UMass Extension Positions:** 1) **Extension Educator – Vegetable Specialist** - The successful candidate will direct and manage the UMass Extension Vegetable Program to address the diverse and dynamic needs of vegetable farmers at the state and regional level through educational programs, applied research, and on-farm projects. Facilitate the conception, funding, design and implementation of programming that enhances the economic, human, and environmental health and sustainability of the vegetable industry in Massachusetts and New England. In collaboration with UMass and external partners, develop, evaluate and teach sustainable production methods for diverse vegetable crop and pest management systems, with special attention to arthropod management. Identify and respond to changing needs including new and emerging insect pests. Provide oversight for staff and resources of the Extension Vegetable Program. 2) **Extension Educator - Soil & Nutrient Management Specialist** - This is a professional Extension Educator position with a 100% extension appointment. The successful candidate will direct and manage the UMass Extension's Nutrient Program which includes a testing operation and facility to address the diverse and dynamic nutrient management and tissue analysis needs of fruit, vegetable and forage growers and turf and landscape agri-businesses (herein called agricultural industries) at the state and regional level through educational programs, applied research, and on-site projects. Facilitate the conception, funding, design and implementation of programming that enhances the economic, human, and environmental health and sustainability of the agricultural industries in Massachusetts and New England. In collaboration with UMass Extension specialists and faculty and external partners, develop, evaluate and teach best nutrient management practices for the agricultural industries with special attention to soil analysis and interpretation and applications to various soil conditions and crop use. Identify and respond to changing agricultural industry needs. Provide oversight for staff and resources of the Extension's soil and tissue testing facility and operations. [More here.](#)
- **For Sale:** Certified organic breeding flock of Dominique chickens. 14 layers and one young rooster. Free-range and healthy. Not vaccinated. One poultry coop and one small barn. Poultry coop needs some repair. Small barn built in 2004, insulated, good ventilation, grain room, predator proof. Pair of Narragansett turkeys. Two years old and ready for breeding. Free-range, hardy and healthy. Located in Acushnet, MA, contact phone number: 508-763-5901.
- **Hiring** for 2015 positions at Allendale Farm, Brookline. [More here.](#)
- **New book:** *Food, Farms, and Community - Exploring Food Systems* by Lisa Chase and Vern Grubinger. How food systems reflect our values and contribute to our economy, environment, and culture. Throughout the US, people are increasingly concerned about where their food comes from, how it is produced, and how its production affects individuals and their communities. The answers to these questions reveal a complex web of interactions. While large, distant farms and multinational companies dominate at national and global levels, innovative programs including farmers' markets, farm-to-school initiatives, and agritourism are forging stronger connections between people and food at local and regional levels. At all levels of the food system, energy use, climate change, food safety, and the maintenance of farmland for the future are critical considerations. [More here.](#)
- **Land for Sale:** Prime river bottom fields for sale. Two parcels: 43 acres and 21 acres a mile and 1/2 apart, on Route 112, Colrain, MA. Contact Chip or Sherry at hager@gmail.com.

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About the *Farm & Market Report*

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MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish.